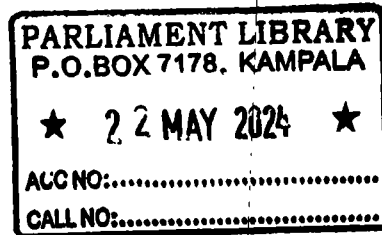




THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

THE VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS' ACT, 2023





THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

I SIGNIFY my assent to the bill.

Y. Museveni

President

Date of assent: 14/5/2024

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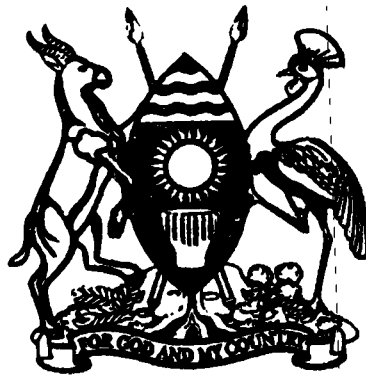
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ESTABLISHMENT

**THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA****THE VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS' ACT, 2023**

An Act to provide for the regulation of veterinary practice by providing for the training, registration and licensing of veterinary professionals and veterinary para-professionals; to provide for matters incidental to the conduct of veterinary professionals and para-professionals in relation to animal health, production, welfare, public health and biosecurity services; to repeal the Veterinary Surgeons Act, Cap. 277; and for related matters.

DATE OF ASSENT:

Date of Commencement:

BE IT ENACTED by Parliament as follows:

PART I—PRELIMINARY**1. Commencement**

This Act shall come into force on a date appointed by the Minister by statutory instrument.

2. Interpretation

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

“animal” includes domestic animals, wild animals, aquatic animals, laboratory animals, poultry species, wild birds,

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bees, insects, fish and silk worms;

“animal husbandry” means livestock management and animal care practices undertaken to promote animal welfare, improve productivity and farm profits;

“Chief Executive Officer” means a person appointed under section 38;

“continuous professional development” means an approved training required of a veterinary practitioner as the Council may determine, for purposes of ensuring that a veterinary practitioner keeps updated with the new and emerging veterinary technical trends in theory and practice;

“Council” means the Uganda Veterinary Council established by section 27;

“currency point” has the value assigned to it in Schedule 1 to this Act;

“direct supervision” means the supervision of a person by a responsible veterinary surgeon who is physically present in the veterinary practice establishment;

“general supervision” means the supervision of a person by a responsible veterinary surgeon who is readily available to communicate with that person;

“internship” means a prescribed period of supervised practical training that a veterinary student obtains after completing formal education, to the time of satisfying the supervisor that the practitioner is competent, in accordance with the provisions of this Act;

“licence” means a licence issued under section 17;

“licensee” means a person licensed to practice veterinary medicine under section 17;

“Minister” means the Minister responsible for veterinary services;

“Ministry” means the Ministry responsible for veterinary services;

“person” includes an individual, firm, company, association, partnership or body of persons, whether incorporated or not;

“private veterinary practice” means the engagement in veterinary practice by a veterinary practitioner for hire, gain, fee, compensation or reward received, promised, offered, expected or accepted, directly or indirectly, by or from the person requesting or receiving the veterinary services;

“public veterinary practice” means engagement in veterinary practice by a veterinary practitioner who is a veterinary officer or para-professional holding office in the public service or any other Government body;

“register” means a register of veterinary practitioners and veterinary practice establishments kept and maintained by the Council under section 61 of this Act;

“veterinary inspector” means a person appointed by the Council under section 43 of this Act;

“veterinary medicine” means any curative or preventive substance, formulated medicament, or mixture of substances, whether proprietary or in the form of a preparation effective in animals, which is used, or is manufactured, sold or represented as suitable for use, in—

- (a) the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention of disease or abnormal physical or mental state or the symptoms of a disease or abnormal physical or mental state in an animal;
- (b) restoring, correcting or modifying any physical, mental or organic function in an animal; or
- (c) controlling internal or external pests and parasites and includes insecticides, vaccines, hormones, alternative medicines, antiseptics, disinfectants, surgical, nutrients and biological products;

“veterinary officer” means a veterinary practitioner who holds office in the public service or any other Government body;

“veterinary para-professional” means a veterinary practitioner who is registered to practice veterinary medicine under the direct or general supervision of a veterinary surgeon;

“veterinary practice” means—

- (a) inspection of foods of animal origin for purposes of food safety;
- (b) provision of animal welfare services;
- (c) provision of forensic evidence related to animals;
- (d) training, research, advise, consultancy services related to animals;

- (e) provision of ethno veterinary medicine, complimentary medicine and integrative therapies to animals;
- (f) to diagnose, treat, correct, change, relieve or prevent an animal disease or condition, deformity, defect, injury or other physical or mental conditions through—
 - (i) the prescription, administration or application of drugs, medicines, biologicals, apparatus, anesthetic or other therapeutic or diagnostic substances or techniques;
 - (ii) the use of any manual or mechanical procedure for hoof care, dental care, artificial insemination or other breeding services, testing for pregnancy or correcting sterility or infertility; and
 - (iii) rendering advice or making recommendation with regard to the procedures referred to in paragraphs (a) to (f); and
- (g) any other related services as prescribed by the Council.

“veterinary practice establishment” includes premises, structure, veterinary laboratory, zoo, ambulatory service facility, animal check point, holding ground, quarantine station, wildlife breeding sanctuary, wildlife ranch and any other specialised establishment where veterinary practice is conducted;

“veterinary practitioner” means a veterinary surgeon, veterinary specialist or veterinary para-professional registered in accordance with this Act;

“veterinary public health” means the application of veterinary science and technology to protect and improve the physical, mental and social well-being of humans;

“veterinary service” means services offered by a veterinary practitioner;

“veterinary specialist” means a veterinary practitioner registered by the Council in accordance with section 6;

“veterinary surgeon” means a person trained in veterinary medicine at degree level and who is engaged in veterinary practice, and is registered in accordance with this Act.

3. Application of Act

(1) This Act applies to every person who engages or intends to engage in veterinary practice in Uganda.

(2) The provisions of this Act relating to registration apply to all veterinary practitioners in public and private veterinary practice.

(3) The provisions of this Act relating to licensing do not apply to veterinary practitioners in the conduct of their duties in the public service but where a veterinary practitioner intends to engage in private practice, those provisions shall apply.

PART II—REGISTRATION OF VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS AND VETERINARY PRACTICE ESTABLISHMENTS

4. Requirement for registration of veterinary practitioner

(1) A person who intends to engage in veterinary practice shall apply to the Council for registration as a veterinary surgeon, veterinary specialist or veterinary para-professional, as the case may be.

(2) A person referred to in subsection (1) shall apply to the Council within three years after attaining the relevant qualification

prescribed in this Act, and any person who applies after the expiry of that period shall sit for examinations, as the Council may prescribe.

5. Qualifications for registration of veterinary surgeon

(1) A person is qualified to be registered as a veterinary surgeon if he or she—

- (a) is a citizen of Uganda; and
- (b) holds a degree in veterinary medicine from a University recognised by the Council and has after attaining that qualification, served an internship of not less than twelve months under the supervision of a registered veterinary surgeon who has not less than five years of experience in veterinary practice.

(2) The Council may in its discretion require an applicant for registration to undertake an examination as Council may prescribe, to satisfy itself that the knowledge and skill of the applicant qualify that applicant for registration.

(3) The examination referred to in subsection (2) may be conducted by the Council or by any other institution appointed by the Council, and that examination shall be conducted on such terms and conditions as the Council may determine.

(4) A person registered by the Council under this section shall swear or affirm the oath set out in Schedule 2 and shall be entitled to have his or her name entered in the register.

6. Qualifications for registration of veterinary specialist

(1) A veterinary surgeon who attains a post graduate qualification related to a specialty in respect of which he or she wishes to be registered shall apply to the Council for registration as a veterinary specialist in that field of specialisation.

(2) The Council shall register the applicant where the Council is satisfied that the applicant has sufficient knowledge and experience to enable him or her practice in the field of specialisation as a veterinary specialist.

7. Qualifications for registration of veterinary para-professional

(1) A person shall be qualified for registration as a veterinary para-professional if that person is a citizen of Uganda and has—

- (a) successfully completed a post-secondary school training course in animal health science lasting at least two years at an institution recognised by the Council and has obtained a certificate, diploma or degree, and has thereafter served an internship of not less than twelve months under the supervision of a veterinary practitioner;
- (b) qualified in animal husbandry, range management or wildlife health and has undertaken a course of not less than one year in animal health, prescribed by the Council, and has served an internship of not less than twelve months under the supervision of a veterinary practitioner; or
- (c) has successfully completed a post-secondary school training course in laboratory technology, or has been determined by the Council to possess qualifications to allow him or her to be registered as a para-professional.

(2) The Council shall prescribe the mode of supervision for a para-professional on internship.

(3) A person registered by the Council under this section shall swear or affirm the oath set out in Schedule 2 and shall be entitled to have his or her name entered in the register.

8. Temporary registration

(1) A person may apply to the Council for temporary registration if—

- (a) that person is not a citizen of Uganda and intends to engage in veterinary practice in Uganda;
 - (b) possesses qualifications from an institution in a jurisdiction other than an institution from Uganda.
 - (c) that person is undertaking internship after graduation; or
 - (d) intends to undertake a specific assignment for the duration of the registration.
- (2) An application under subsection (1) shall be accompanied by—
- (a) certified copies of the certificates of the applicant, in veterinary medicine, duly authenticated by the responsible veterinary regulatory body of the country where the certificates were obtained;
 - (b) evidence of payment of the prescribed fee;
 - (c) proof of good professional conduct from the responsible veterinary statutory body in the country of origin of the applicant; and
 - (d) particulars of the organisation or institution that intends to engage the service of the applicant or offer internship placement to the applicant.
- (3) Subsection (2) (c) shall not apply to an applicant for internship after graduation.
- (4) The Council may require a person applying for temporary registration to appear before it for an oral or written examination.
- (5) This section does not apply to a person who qualifies for temporary registration if that person is attached to a veterinary training institution in Uganda for purposes of a capacity building program for a period not exceeding three months.

9. Registration of veterinary practice establishment

(1) Any person who intends to set up a veterinary practice establishment after the commencement of this Act shall apply to the Council for registration of that veterinary practice establishment.

(2) The Council may make an inquiry and inspection as it deems fit, upon payment of the prescribed fees, for purposes of satisfying itself that the proposed veterinary practice establishment is fit for registration.

(3) The Minister shall, by regulations, prescribe the requirements for registration of a veterinary practice establishment.

10. Consideration of applications for registration

(1) The Council shall consider an application for registration and shall communicate its decision to the applicant in writing within sixty days from the date of receipt of the application.

(2) The Council may refuse to register an applicant where the Council finds that the applicant is not eligible for registration in accordance with the requirements of this Act.

(3) Where the Council refuses to register an applicant under subsection (2) the Council shall give reasons for the refusal in writing, to the applicant.

11. Issuance of certificate of registration

(1) Where the Council is satisfied that the applicant is eligible to engage in veterinary practice, the Council shall register the applicant.

(2) Every veterinary practitioner and veterinary practice establishment registered by the Council shall be issued with a certificate of registration in a form prescribed by regulations.

(3) A certificate of temporary registration may be issued on such terms and conditions as the Council may deem fit, including a

condition that the veterinary practitioner confines his or her practice to the area of competence for which he or she is engaged or registered.

(4) A veterinary practitioner who is registered temporarily, shall for every year of practice in Uganda, submit to the Council, a quarterly report showing among others, the progress made towards the completion of the task in respect of which the certificate of temporary registration is issued.

(5) A veterinary practitioner who is registered temporarily on application under section 8(1)(b), may apply for registration under section 5, 6 or 7 as the case may be, if at the expiry of the temporary registration, the Council is satisfied that he or she is a fit and proper person to be registered as a veterinary practitioner.

(6) Upon registration, a veterinary practitioner is eligible to apply for a licence to engage in veterinary practice.

12. Suspension or cancellation of certificate of registration

(1) The Council may suspend a certificate of registration, for a period determined by the Council, or until the veterinary practitioner complies with the conditions determined by the Council.

(2) The Council may cancel a certificate of registration where the registered veterinary practitioner—

- (a) violates any of the terms and conditions specified in the Code of professional conduct and ethics prescribed under section 70(2)(a);
- (b) fails to comply with the condition of suspension, in the case of the suspension of a certificate of registration;
- (c) fails to keep a veterinary practice establishment in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Council; and
- (d) contravenes any provision of this Act or the conditions for registration specified by the Council in the certificate of registration.

(3) Where the certificate of registration is cancelled, the Council shall recall that certificate and the person holding that certificate shall surrender it to the Council within one month from the date of recall.

(4) A person who fails to surrender a certificate of registration to the Council commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding three hundred and fifty currency points or a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years, or both.

(5) This section applies to veterinary practice establishments with the necessary modifications.

13. Effect of suspension or cancellation of certificate of registration

A veterinary practitioner whose certificate of registration, for purposes of this Act—

- (a) is suspended, shall not operate within the period of suspension; or
- (b) is cancelled, shall be taken not to be registered from the date of cancellation of the certificate of registration.

14. Use of titles

(1) A veterinary practitioner shall be entitled to use the title of “Veterinary Surgeon”, “Veterinary Specialist” or “Veterinary Para-professional” as, the case may be, and—

- (a) in the case of a veterinary surgeon and veterinary specialist, the prefix of the title “Doctor” in an abbreviated form followed by his or her name as it appears in the register; and
- (b) in the case of a veterinary para-professional, his or her name as it appears in the register followed by any suitable words in parentheses to the effect that he or she is a veterinary para-professional.

(2) A person who uses a title referred to in subsection (1) which he or she is not entitled to use, commits an offence, and is liable on conviction, to a fine not exceeding three hundred and fifty currency points or a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years, or both.

PART III—LICENSING OF VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS,
VETERINARY PRACTICE ESTABLISHMENTS AND
REGULATION OF VETERINARY PRACTICE

*Licensing of veterinary practitioners and veterinary
practice establishment*

15. Licensing

(1) A veterinary practitioner, other than a public veterinary practitioner shall not practice or hold himself or herself out, whether directly or indirectly, as engaging in or being able to engage in veterinary practice or to take up employment or operate a business as a veterinary practitioner, unless he or she is licensed under this Act.

(2) An organisation, institution or veterinary practice establishment shall not offer veterinary services or any other animal health services, unless it is licensed by the Council.

(3) A person who contravenes this section commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding three hundred and fifty currency points, or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years or both.

(4) In the case of continuous contravention following a conviction under subsection (3), the person shall be liable to an additional penalty not exceeding seven hundred currency points.

16. Application for licence

(1) A veterinary practitioner who intends to engage in veterinary practice or to operate a veterinary practice establishment shall apply to the Council for a licence.

(2) An application under subsection (1) shall be accompanied by—

- (a) a copy of the certificate of registration of the applicant as a veterinary surgeon, veterinary specialist or veterinary para-professional, as the case may be;
- (b) evidence of payment of the prescribed fee; and
- (c) any other requirement as the Council may prescribe.

(3) A person who wishes to operate a veterinary practice establishment shall apply to the Council for a licence to operate a veterinary practice establishment.

(4) An application for a licence under subsection (3) shall be accompanied by—

- (a) the particulars of the veterinary practitioner who shall manage the veterinary practice establishment;
- (b) a copy of the certificate of registration of the veterinary practitioner referred to in paragraph (a);
- (c) a copy of the certificate of registration of the veterinary practice establishment;
- (d) evidence of payment of the prescribed fee; and
- (e) any other requirements as the Council may prescribe.

17. Grant of licence

(1) The Council shall consider an application made under section 16 and where the Council is satisfied that the applicant meets the requirements for licensing, the Council may grant to the applicant a licence to practice veterinary medicine or to operate a veterinary practice establishment, as the case may be.

(2) A licence referred to in subsection (1) shall be in the form prescribed by regulations.

- (3) The Council may refuse to grant a licence where—
- (a) the applicant is not a veterinary practitioner;
 - (b) the application is not supported by the requirements specified in section 16(2) or (4) of this Act;
 - (c) the applicant has contravened this Act; and
 - (d) for any other reason as the Council deems fit.

(4) Where the Council refuses to issue a licence under subsection (3) the Council shall give the reasons for the refusal in writing to the applicant.

18. Renewal of licence

(1) A licence to practice veterinary medicine or to operate a veterinary practice establishment granted under section 17 shall be valid for the calendar year in which it is granted, and may be renewed every year.

(2) A licensee may apply to the Council for renewal of a licence within three months before the expiry of the licence.

(3) The Council shall consider the application and if it is satisfied that the applicant has complied with the requirements of this Act, the Council may renew the licence.

19. Suspension or revocation of licence

(1) Where, upon conducting an inquiry into the conduct of a licensee, the Council determines that the licence held by the veterinary practitioner should be revoked, the Council shall revoke the licence and shall communicate the reasons for the revocation to the licensee within reasonable time, but in any case not later than twenty-one working days from the date of revocation of the licence.

(2) Where the Council determines that the conduct of the licensee does not warrant a revocation of the licence, the Council may suspend the licence for a specific period and until the specified conditions are fulfilled.

(3) Where the licensee fails to fulfill the conditions set by the Council under subsection (2) within a specified period, the Council may revoke the licence.

Veterinary Practice

20. Private veterinary practice

(1) A veterinary practitioner licensed under this Act is entitled to engage in private veterinary practice and to demand, sue for and recover reasonable charges for professional advice, visits and any other services and the value of all veterinary appliances or materials or substances supplied by him or her.

(2) A veterinary practitioner shall not recover any charges for veterinary services given or visit made, or for the value of any medicine or appliance supplied, where at the time that veterinary service was given or visit made or such medicine or appliance was supplied, the veterinary practitioner was not licensed under this Act.

(3) A veterinary surgeon or veterinary specialist licensed under this Act may acquire and personally compound or dispense any medicine which is prescribed by himself or herself or by another veterinary surgeon or veterinary specialist, for use in the treatment of an animal which is under his or her professional care.

(4) A licensed veterinary para-professional shall only undertake the services and procedures prescribed in Schedule 3 to this Act.

(5) A licensed veterinary para-professional may, where necessary, render first aid in cases of emergency and shall, as soon as is

reasonably practicable, refer the first aid cases to the nearest veterinary surgeon or veterinary specialist.

(6) The Ministry or a local government may engage a licensee to offer veterinary services on behalf of the Government on such terms and conditions as may be agreed upon with the licensee.

21. Certification

(1) A document required to be certified by a duly qualified veterinary surgeon or veterinary specialist shall not be valid unless it is signed by a veterinary practitioner registered under this Act as a veterinary surgeon or veterinary specialist.

(2) A person who—

- (a) signs a document in contravention of subsection (1); or
- (b) knowingly alters a certified document;

commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding three hundred and fifty currency points or a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years, or both.

22. Duties of veterinary practitioners

(1) The duties of a veterinary practitioner are—

- (a) to conduct the affairs of the profession with the highest degree of honesty, skill and integrity and to observe the Code of professional conduct and ethics prescribed under this Act;
- (b) to inform the Council of any person or veterinary practice establishment engaging in veterinary practice in contravention of this Act;
- (c) to report to the commissioner responsible for animal health, any notifiable disease that comes to his or her knowledge in the course of his or her practice;

- (d) to provide a monthly written report, in the prescribed format, to a veterinary officer within the jurisdiction of his or her area of operation; and
- (e) to take the necessary precautions in his or her duties to prevent the transmission of disease from one animal to another.

(2) A veterinary practitioner who refuses or neglects to perform his or her duties under subsection (1), shall be deemed to have contravened the professional Code of conduct and ethics and shall be liable to disciplinary action by the Council.

23. Exemptions to engage in veterinary practice without licence

(1) The Minister may, upon the advice of the Council by regulations—

- (a) exempt any person or category of persons from the requirements of registration or licensing or both; and
- (b) prescribe the procedure and manner in which an exempted person or category of persons shall practice.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), an exemption shall be granted in respect of—

- (a) the performance of any of the following operations to an animal by the owner of the animal, any member of a household of which the owner is a member or by a person in the regular employment of the owner—
 - (i) bloodless castration;
 - (ii) tailing of a lamb;
 - (iii) the docking of the tail of a dog before its eyes are open;
 - (iv) the disbudding of a calf under the age of four weeks;

- (v) earmarking an animal;
- (vi) any minor treatment, test or operation as may be specified by the Council from time to time; or
- (vii) bloodless dehorning;
- (b) anything done to an animal, otherwise than for reward, by a person engaged or employed on a farm or by the owner of the animal or another person, for the purpose of livestock management practice; and
- (c) anything done to render first aid for the purpose of saving life or relieving pain in an animal.

Veterinary practice establishment

24. Inspection of veterinary practice establishment

(1) A veterinary inspector may at any time enter a veterinary practice establishment for purposes of ensuring compliance with this Act.

(2) Where a veterinary inspector determines that the operation of the veterinary practice establishment is in contravention of this Act and is putting human and animal health at risk, the veterinary inspector may—

- (a) close the establishment;
- (b) seize and retain any appliance, equipment, drugs, biologicals, or documents that appear to the veterinary inspector to be unfit for the intended use; and
- (c) take a sample of the product or any substance capable of being used in the practice of veterinary medicine.

(3) A veterinary inspector shall exercise his or her powers under subsection (2) in the presence of the operator or the person found in charge of the veterinary practice establishment and the veterinary inspector may be accompanied by a police officer.

(4) A veterinary inspector shall seal off a veterinary practice establishment closed under subsection (2).

25. Recognition of veterinary training institution

(1) Notwithstanding the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001, a person who is in charge of a training institution in Uganda which conducts a course of training leading to the award of a qualification that renders persons who receive awards registrable under this Act, shall apply to the Council for recognition of that institution as a veterinary training institution.

(2) The Minister may, by regulations, prescribe the procedure for recognising training institutions for the purposes of this section.

(3) The Council may, at any time, cease to recognise a training institution which, in the opinion of the Council, is no longer of a satisfactory standard to conduct a course of training to qualify persons receiving awards from that institution, for registration under this Act.

(4) The cessation of recognition of an institution under subsection (3) shall not invalidate the registration of a person who graduated from that institution and was registered prior to the ceasing of recognition of the training institution.

26. Continuous professional development

(1) Every veterinary practitioner shall undertake minimum continuing professional development as prescribed by the Council.

(2) The Council may refuse to renew the license of a veterinary practitioner, who, without reasonable cause, fails to undertake the minimum continuing professional development referred to in subsection (1).